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Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

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22-11
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 DLOS-04 SAL-01 OFA-01 CIAE-00 PM-04

H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 ACDA-05 TRSE-00 SAJ-01 NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00

INRE-00 EB-07 IO-11 COME-00 /083 W
---------- 047152
O R 271216Z JAN 76
FM AMEMBASSY LONDON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8452
INFO USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK IMMEDIATE
COMICEDEFOR
CINCLANT
CNO
SECDEF
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY HELSINKI
AMEMBASSY OSLO
AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

C O N F I D E N T I A L LONDON 01302

E.O. 1L652: XGDS-1
TAGS: EFIS, PFOR, MARR, IC' UK, US, NATO
SUBJECT: UK-ICELAND FISHERIES DISPUTE

1. AS UK-ICELAND FISHERIES TALKS MOVE JANUARY 27 INTO FOURTH DAY, ACTION CONTINUES TO BE CENTERED AT NUMBER 10 WHERE PRIME MINISTERS ARE MEETING FOR THIRD TIME. (THEY

MET JANUARY 24 AT CHEQUERS FOR SEVEN HOURS AND JANUARY 26 AT NUMBER 10 FOR SIX AND A HALF HOURS.) HMG HAS PULLED BLANKET OF SECRECY TIGHT OVER THE TALKS. AND THE ORESS HAS BEEN REDUCED TO RANDOM SPECULATION. BOTH TIMES AND GUARDIAN ASSERTED JANUARY 26 THAT ICELAND IS NOW CONFIDENTIAL

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SEEKING A MAXIMUM BRITISH CATCH OF 45,000 TONS, 20,000

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TONS LESS THAN THE OFFER IT WITHDREW WHEN THE ROYAL NAVY WAS SENT IN, AND LESS THAN HALF OF BRITAIN'S LAST OFFICIAL DEMAND OF 110,000 TONS. MEANWHILE, BRITISH TRAWLER ASSOCIATION CONTINUES TO ARGUE ANY AGREEMENT BELOW 80,000 TONS WOULD SEVERELY HARM UK FISHING INDUSTRY.

2. ALTHOUGH IT IS DIFFICULT TO PENETRATE THE GOVERN-MENT'S RIGOROUSLY IMPOSED VEIL OF TEARS, IT SEEMS CLEAR AT THIS POINT THAT HMG IS FACED WITH TWO EQUALLY UN-PLEASANT ALTERNATIVES. IT CAN CAVE TO ICELAND'S DEMANDS -- A DIGURE WELL BELOW 80,000 TONS -- AND TRY TO MINIMIZE THE DOMESTIC POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC CONSEQUENCES, OR IT CAN REFUSE TO CAPITULATE, SEND THE FRIGATES BACK INTO THE DISPUTED WATERS, AND ACCEPT A BREAK IN RELATIONS AND PROBABLE FURTHER DAMAGINQ EFFECTS ON NATO.

3. A SOURCE CLOSE TO FOREIGN SECRETARY TOLD US YESTER-DAY THAT HAD THE BRITISH TO DO IT ALL AGAIN, THEY WOULD "FOLLOW THE GERMAN EXAMPLE" AND ACCEDE TO ICELANDIC DEMANDS AT THE OUTSET. COMMENTING THAT ONE DOES NOT NEGOTIATE WITH ICELANDERS SO MUCH AS SIMPLY LISTEN TO THEM REPEAT THEIR POSITION OVER AND OVER AGAIN, SOURCE SORROWFULLY ADMITTED THAT HMG HAD FROM THE BEGINNING OVERESTIMATED ICELAND'S FLEXIBILITY AND WILLINGNESS TO COMPROMISE.

4. SINCE HALLGRIMSSON IS RETURNING TO REYKJAVIK TONIGHT, WE SHOULD HAVE INDICATION LATER TODAY WHICH OOISON WILSON AN CALLAGHAN HAVE DECIDED TO SWALLOW.

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